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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

11 April 1949

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM NO. 160

SUBJECT: West German Reaction to Unity Overtures

Recent reports have stressed the possibility of a trend in western Germany toward the establishment of close relations with the Communist regime in the Soviet Zone as a reflection of German desire for a renewal of national unity. Among various maneuvers to exploit German dissatisfaction with the present separate political development of the western area have been the recent visits of Soviet Zone politicians to western Germany. These attempts have had no immediate success, and it is believed that present conditions in western Germany preclude the development of an actual rapprochement between western and eastern Germany in 1949.

Principal factors rendering such a development unlikely include: (1) the absence of both capability and desire in any important west German organized group to make any significant political or economic concession to the Communist regime in the Soviet Zone; (2) the apathy of the west German population toward political issues; (3) the desire of west Germans to become a full fledged member of ERP and Western Union; and (4) the probability that the west German political parties will be able to produce a constitution and subsequent provisional government acceptable to the western powers, thereby stabilizing the existing political situation.

Although conservative commercial and political circles in west Germany strongly desire the eastern markets now officially closed to them by the western counter-blockade, they

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do not desire a political unification of Germany on Soviet terms. Even were such a desire present, western Germans lack sufficient freedom of action under Allied occupation to make major commitments to the Germans of the Soviet Zone. During 1949, western German political and pressure groups will have only one opportunity to take relatively independent action of any magnitude, namely, on the question of a provisional west German Government.

Existing west German discontent with various allied policies, however, offers the Kremlin its best target for propaganda use. No west German political party appears presently capable of arousing its following to support any effective protest action, and although such issues as the Ruhr Authority, dismantling, reparations, and western boundary changes caused considerable immediate agitation, German reaction rarely went beyond disapproval voiced by professional politicians and minority pressure groups.

It is assumed that the western powers will in the near future reach agreement on outstanding German issues and will then be in a position to apply concerted pressure on west German political parties to complete an acceptable constitution. The draft of this constitution has been delayed for the past seven months by the inability of the western occupying powers to agree on the form of the projected west German state, rather than by German obstructionism. The Parliamentary Council at Bonn has now drawn up a detailed draft constitution which, except for its provision for the centralization of certain financial and taxing powers, has received the unofficial approval of the three Military Governors. Although west German parties will continue to protest against Allied interference, they will probably comply with western demands and will produce an acceptable constitution and subsequently a provisional government. This government will have slight

- 2 -

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popular appeal and will assume by degrees a more centralized form. It will, however, stabilize the present political structure in west Germany and will forestall informal unifying arrangements of any significance between western Germany and eastern Germany during 1949.

(This estimate applies only to developments anticipated for the year 1949. A further estimate concerned with the more dangerous long-term probabilities will be issued at a later date.)

- 3 -

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